



Welcome to the April – May 22 issue of Surrey News

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Please note: Some of the articles in the front of the newsletter include information for young people and adults.

This newsletter is coming out during **World Autism Acceptance Week** (28th March – 3rd April) and events are taking place all over the world to mark it.

Here in Surrey, there was an autism Friendly Community Initiative in Redhill on Friday 25th March and the Surrey Local Offer have a feature page with videos and information about the Surrey All-age Autism Strategy <https://bit.ly/37YBXy3>

Surrey County Council also has a page about the Autism Strategy here <https://bit.ly/35jZatB>

On a personal note, I am sadly having to stand down from the role of Branch Chair from the end of March for personal reasons.

This means that the Branch URGENTLY needs a new volunteer to be our Chair.

If we cannot find anyone to take on the role, then the Branch will have to close, which would be very sad after 27 years of providing support to Surrey families.

Could you, or someone you know, be the person to take on the highly rewarding role of taking the Branch forward? Please see page 3 for more information.

Carol Teunon
Outgoing Chair

NAS Surrey Branch

Email: surrey.branch@nas.org.uk

Website: <https://NASSurreyBranch.org>

Facebook: @NASSurreyBranch

Donations:

www.justgiving.com/nassurreybranch

NAS Surrey Branch Contacts

General Information

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membership@mugsy.org

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Jo Dilworth

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Rachel Pearson

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Parents of Adults' Group

Hilary Dyce hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk

Parents of Children with PDA Group

Sara Truman stumansurrey@gmail.com

Spouses and Partners Group

Sara Truman stumansurrey@gmail.com

POSTAL ADDRESS

NAS Surrey Branch

c/o Walton Charities,

2 Quintet, Churchfield Road,

Walton on Thames

Surrey KT12 2TZ

No NAS staff or volunteers work here.

Other Useful Contacts

Unless clearly stated, organisations are not endorsed by NAS Surrey Branch or the NAS.

NAS Website: <https://www.autism.org.uk/>

NAS membership: <https://bit.ly/3l84tBW>

Education Support

NAS Education Rights: <https://bit.ly/3BTfux6>

SEND Advice Surrey: 01737 737300

www.sendadvice.surrey.org.uk

SOS!SEN charity to support EHCPs etc, Tel: 020 8538 3731, Web: www.sossen.org.uk

Family Support & Representation

Mindworks www.mindworks-surrey.org

Portage – support for children with SEND under 3.5 years <https://bit.ly/3zLW635>

Family Voice Surrey parent representation www.familyvoicesurrey.org

Action for Carers tel: 0303 040 1234 <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/>

Parent Programmes

NAS Stepping Up For Autism course

Email: Surrey.FamilySupport@nas.org.uk

Pat-P (under 5s) & **Cygnnet** (aged 5-16)

<https://family.sendteachingschool.co.uk>

Activities for children and young people

NAS Resource Centre, Godalming: 01483

521743 SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk

interAKTive, Epsom-based charity for children with ASCs and other difficulties 07876 762178 www.interaktive.org.uk

Adult Services

Surrey Adult Social Svcs: 0300 200 1005

NAS Surrey Service Tel: 01483 861600, email: surrey.service@nas.org.uk

Employment Support

Employability for people with disabilities including ASCs Tel: 01483 806806

<https://bit.ly/3f8WXTu>

AS Mentoring specialist mentoring and employment support for autistic people <https://asmentoring.co.uk/>

Benefits advice

For children: <https://bit.ly/3xblygN>

For adults: <https://bit.ly/3ydoXNg>

Cerebra Downloadable DLA guide: <https://bit.ly/3lpEoyh>

URGENT: New Chair Needed for NAS Surrey Branch

As you'll have seen from her Chair's letter, Carol Teunon has sadly had to step down as Chair unexpectedly due to family circumstances. We want to thank her for all she has done for the branch since she took on the role in January 2021, especially for all the work she did representing branch members so our views were taken into account in the development of Surrey's All-Age Autism Strategy.

This means we need a volunteer to take over the role of Chair of the NAS Surrey Branch to keep offering the valuable support we've provided for the last 27 years. **As a branch of the National Autistic Society, we cannot legally operate without a Chair, so if we don't find a volunteer to take on the role, the Branch will have to close.**

If you enjoy leading small groups of people to sustain and grow a supportive community then this might be a good role for you.

In Surrey we are fortunate to have an NAS professional service which runs clubs for autistic children and young people, a professional Family Support service that provides training for parents, and services for autistic adults. The role of the NAS Surrey Branch is focussed on providing volunteer-run parent-to-parent support and information for families of autistic children and adults.

Summary of the Surrey Branch Chair's role:

- Chairing/leading quarterly committee meetings and AGM.
- Oversight of communications, branch events and activities
- Ensure compliance with NAS policies e.g. risk assessments, safeguarding
- Ensure finances are managed effectively in partnership with the Branch Treasurer
- Support fundraising in the branch
- Act as a key contact for the NAS Senior Branch Engagement Officer
- Support and motivate the team involved in running your branch
- Try to resolve any difficulties experienced by the branch

Location and hours

- Home-based with occasional travel to branch activities (travel expenses paid)
- Flexibility on days and the amount of time committed to the role – around 5 - 10 hours a week and able to attend some daytime and some evening meetings

Skills, experience and qualities

- Confident in working and communicating with other committee members, branch members and individuals & organisations outside the Branch. Communication would be face to face and by email, phone, Zoom etc.
- Ideally, comfortable with speaking publicly
- Able to motivate people and help people work together
- Able to understand other people's experiences and speak on behalf of families of autistic people to others (not just about your own situation).
- Supportive of the NAS
- Able to listen and involve others in the group and not to dominate
- Able to fulfil financial requirements of the role

We are also seeking other volunteers, especially those who are parent/carers of school-age autistic children.

If you would like to find out more about the role of chair or general volunteering, with no obligation, please contact Sara Truman at surrey.branch@nas.org.uk

Talk on Advocacy and Autistic Parenting Hosted by the Branch

We will be hosting an online talk, free to Surrey parents, about Advocacy and Autistic Parenting on **Monday 9th May at 8pm**.

Jodie Isitt is an autistic parent of three autistic children, one of whom is also diagnosed with a PDA profile. She is a published author, advocacy consultant, speaker and founder of [The Nurture Programme](#). The talk will focus on building confidence for parents to advocate for their autistic child / children as they navigate the often daunting world of SEN and includes:

- Confidence in navigating the SEN system
- Trusting your gut
- Maintaining your own wellbeing
- Advocating in a way that gets results

To book please go to: [NAS Surrey Branch Event Booking](#) or copy and paste the following link into your browser: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/advocacy-and-autistic-parenting-registration-309890249077>

Autism Show in London in June

The Autism Show <https://london.autismshow.co.uk/> is running from Friday 17th June 9.30 am – 4.30 pm and Saturday 18th June 10.00 am – 4.00 pm at ExCel in London. It is the national event for autism, in association with the National Autistic Society.

It includes information and direction pre or post diagnosis for anyone facing daily challenges, or approaching transition points. You can choose from over 100 hours of talks, clinics and workshops, plus hundreds of specialist products and services.

Tickets are bookable through Eventbrite: Parent/Family Carer tickets are £18.00 + £1.99 booking fee. Concession tickets are £16.00 + £1.84 booking fee.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-autism-show-london-tickets-292529241837>

Social Events and Weekday Group for Autistic Girls

Appeer is a community interest company set up to benefit autistic girls and women and their families, primarily in Surrey and borders. They run activities both on-line and in person for younger girls aged 7-12 and teenage girls aged 13-18+.

They are running a pilot 6 week group on a Wednesday suitable for autistic girls aged 7 -12 who are not currently attending school, are home schooled or who have access to educational provision and it has been agreed they would benefit from this group.

The pilot group will include activities to support life skills, understanding of being autistic and wellbeing. Sessions are on 20th April, 27th April, 4th May, 11th May, 18th May, 25th May from 10.00am-12.30pm in Woking.

The cost is £295 per place for 6 weeks (*Note: the full cost of support, to APPEER, to run this programme is £500 per place for 6 weeks. Appeer are grateful to the National Lottery and grant funding to be able to offer a discount of £205 per place*).

For more details go to the Appeer website: <https://bit.ly/3N6Q04T> or email jo@appeer.org.uk or claire@appeer.org.uk to register your interest.

If you have problems clicking on any links, you may need to paste them into your browser

Online Talks by Tony Attwood

The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) are hosting talks by Tony Attwood on Autism and Family Dynamics and Special Interests. The event is taking place online (and in person in Sheffield) between 9.00am and 4.00pm on 11th May. The cost to attend online is £60 for someone who isn't a member of ACAMH. The price includes access to recording of the talks for up to 28 days. The event is split into morning and afternoon sessions.

For further details go to: <https://www.acamh.org/event/tony-attwood-autism-may22/>

Thank You for Generous Donations

The Branch has recently received donations from local organisations. We don't receive any funding, so donations like these are essential to enable us to continue our work. We are grateful for the following donations:

- **Rotary Club of Banstead** which donated £500 from their Christmas appeal.
- £500 from **The TK Maxx and Homesense Foundation's Community Fund** programme which supports local communities. Associates (employees) from TK Maxx and Homesense stores, processing centres and offices nominate local charities to receive grants that are doing great work in supporting the most vulnerable.

Update on Manor Mead School Expansion

Surrey County Council and The Federation of Manor Mead and Walton Leigh Schools are proposing that Manor Mead School will expand by 60 places, from 83 places to 143 places with a new satellite site in Virginia Water.

It is also proposed that the school will change school designation from a single designation of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) to a dual designation of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This 60-place expansion will be provided on a satellite site at Christchurch Road, Virginia Water. All pupils will have an EHCP specifying the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs. The expansion is subject to permission being granted by the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

NAS Stepping up for Autism Courses for Parents

As part of the new Mindworks Surrey offer, NAS professionals offer Stepping Up for Autism courses for parents and carers. These are 8-session courses for parents and carers of children and young people who are autistic or have similar needs, and live in Surrey. The sessions include:

- Understanding autism
- Family Wellbeing
- Communication
- Understanding Behaviour
- Sensory Differences
- Supporting Social Skills

A range of dates, times and formats are available with a number of courses running each term. Call 01483 521 744 or email surrey.familysupport@nas.org.uk to book.

If you have problems clicking on any links, you may need to paste them into your browser

'All Aboard Club' in Woking and Sutton

All Aboard Club is a train-themed group which runs play sessions for autistic and ADHD children. Activities are designed and run by people with lived experience of autism / ADHD who understand children's challenges and their special interests.

Inclusive play sessions take place at St Nicholas Community Hall in Sutton, at the 7th Woking Scout Hut in Woking, The Lightbox Woking, Twickenham and the London Museum of Water & Steam, Kew. For details of dates and times see:

<https://www.allaboardclub.com/play-sessions/>

ABLEize Disability and Mobility Directory

ABLEize is an independent UK disability, special needs and mobility website. It includes regularly updated listings from mobility and daily living aids through to support, disability sports, arts, access and travel, accessible holidays, education, care providers and a whole range of social and fun clubs and groups.

You can search for events and services in Surrey here:

<https://www.ableize.com/disabled-groups-and-clubs-by-county/surrey/>

Gamers Lounge Events in Guildford

The next monthly sessions of the Gamers Lounge event are at The Boileroom in Guildford on:

- Saturday 2nd April 2022
- Saturday 7th May 2022
- Saturday 4th June 2022
- Saturday 9th July 2022

Tickets are £5 plus booking fee and are advertised each month on the website: <https://www.theboileroom.net/>. Sessions are 12noon to 2pm, and 2pm to 4pm.

Please note: dates sometimes need to change so please do check the website.

Whilst not an autism specific event, many Gamers Lounge customers are autistic, both adults and children. There's a range of retro consoles to choose from, including Sega Megadrive, SNES, NES, Playstation 2 and Dreamcast, with a choice of hundreds of games. You can also bring along your Nintendo Switches and use these.

Hygiene protocols are in place, and consoles are cleaned between use. People are advised to wear masks unless exempt.

You only need to buy a ticket for the gamer/s, not carers / parents. New people are welcome to drop in on the day to have a look around without committing to a ticket. Capacity is 20 people per session.

Please note that children cannot be left unattended at Gamers Lounge. Families who are not gaming are welcome to stay in the venue, and also use the covered garden area where you can get hot/cold drinks, food and ice cream.

For more information, or to plan your visit please contact Andrew Smith, email Andrew.smith38410@gmail.com or Tel: 07885 723243

Science Museum Events for Children with SEND

The Science Museum runs a range of events for children with Special Needs including 'Early Birds', a sensory friendly event for families with members who benefit from visiting the museum outside regular hours, free from the hustle and bustle of the general public such as those with autism or sensory processing differences.

Early Birds in April will be Power UP-themed - you'll be able to play more than 160 consoles, from retro arcade standards through to the latest in VR technology. Please note, these popular events get booked up very quickly, but do keep an eye on the website for future events: <https://bit.ly/3wn4M1u>

Autism Section on Tourism For All Website

The Tourism for All website has a section with information on holidays, activities and day-trips specifically for families that include someone with autism
<https://www.tourismforall.co.uk/autism-friendly>

Family Voice Surrey Events in April and May

Family Voice Surrey provides a forum to share knowledge and improve opportunities for families with children or young adults up to the age of 25 with SEND and chronic illnesses, including mental health conditions. Forthcoming events include:

Dad's Event - Communicating with Neurodiverse teenagers 7.00pm Monday 4th April

Join expert Dr Mark Brown of Special Help 4 Special Needs to discuss improving interactions with neurodiverse teenagers and pre-teens. Mark has over 30 years' experience working with neurodiverse issues. He will be offering invaluable advice and you will be able to share experiences with other Dads and male parent carers.

Contact volunteers Sara and Emily, Waverley and Runnymede Coordinators by emailing waverley@familyvoicesurrey.org for details and to get the zoom login details.

School Anxiety Chat 11.00 am Wednesday 13th April

If you have a child or young person who struggles with attending school or college, you may like to join this friendly support group. There is a WhatsApp group for day-to-day chat and regular Zoom catch-ups, currently on the second Wednesday of each month at 11am.

Email reigatebanstead@familyvoicesurrey.org for joining details.

ADHD/ASD Group 12.45pm Tuesday 26th April

Join Family Voice Surrey for the ADHD/ASD online chat group for parent carers of children and young people with neurodiverse conditions.

The group meets monthly via Zoom. The FVS hosts for the event are Sara Draycott (FVS Waverley Coordinator) and Diana Phillips (FVS Woking Coordinator).

Email waverley@familyvoicesurrey.org for more details and the zoom login details.

Keep an eye on the Family Voice Surrey events website for details of other events:
<https://www.familyvoicesurrey.org/single-post/family-voice-surrey-spring-events-for-your-diary>

NAS SURREY BRANCH CALENDAR April – June 2022

Please note, all dates are provisional, dependant on Covid restrictions or other unexpected events.

Please contact the host by email so that they know numbers and to confirm that the meeting is going ahead.

ZOOM SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN IN SURREY

Meets monthly. Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to attend.

For Zoom links for these meetings, email support@nassurreybranch.org

Monday 25th April 8.00 pm

Wednesday 11th May 10.00 am

Wednesday 8th June 8.00 pm

LOCAL IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS

In-person support groups run by parent-volunteers for parents/carers of autistic children in Surrey. Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to attend.

Ashted – The Leg of Mutton and Cauliflower, 48, The Street, Ashted KT21 1AZ

Contact: Tarah Basu tarahbasu@googlemail.com

Wednesday 20th April 8.00 – 9.30 pm

Please get in touch for future dates.

Frensham - Squires Garden Centre, The Reeds Road, Frensham GU10 3BP

Contact: Christine Malik christinemalik@btinternet.com

Monday 25th April 9.15 – 11.00 am

Monday 23rd May 9.15 – 11.00 am

Monday 27th June 9.15 – 11.00 am

Guildford

Contact: Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Fri 22nd April 10.00am -12.00noon **Caffe Nero, 66 North Street, Guildford GU1 4AH**

Mon 23rd May 7.30 – 9.30pm **The White House, 8 High Street, Guildford GU2 4AJ**

Fri 17th June 10.00am – 12.00noon **Caffe Nero, 66 North St, Guildford GU1 4AH**

Hinchley Wood – via Zoom

Contact: Emily Gorvy email: emily.gorvy@hotmail.co.uk

Friday 13th May at 9.30am

Woking – Edwins Garden Centre, Egley Road, Mayford, Woking GU22 0NH

Contact: Sarah Norris sarahnorris2003@gmail.com

Wednesday 4th May 10.00 – 12:00 pm

Wednesday 8th June 10.00 – 12:00 pm

Please note, there won't be a Woking meeting in April.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Parents of Adults Group

Face-to-face meetings in West and East Surrey alternate with Zoom meetings.
Contact hosts for venues/links.

Thurs 7th April 2.30 pm **Zoom** Contact Hilary Dyce hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk
Tues 19th April 7.30 pm **Zoom** Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com
Tues 3rd May 7.30 pm **Guildford**. Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com
Mon 16th May 7.30 pm **Redhill**. Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com
Fri 10th June 2.30 pm **Zoom** Contact Hilary Dyce hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk
Mon 20th June 7.30 pm **Zoom** Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Parents of Girls Group – Woking and Guildford

Contact Sally Roberts sallyaroberts@hotmail.co.uk

A group for parents of girls. Meets about once a month during term-time.

Woking: Twelve Thirty Café, Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG

Guildford: Costa Coffee, Spectrum Leisure Centre, Parkway, Guildford GU1 1UP

Thursday 21st April 10.00am – 12.00 pm Guildford

Tuesday 17th May 10.00am – 12.00 pm Woking

Monday 13th June 10.00am – 12.00 pm Guildford

Spouses and Partners Group, Guildford

Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Evening meetings for the partners of autistic people (no diagnosis necessary).

Venue: Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford GU1 4LH

Wednesday 27th April 8.00 – 9.30 p.m.

Wednesday 25th May 8.00 – 9.30 pm

Wednesday 29th June 8.00 – 9.30 pm

Parents of children and young people with Pathological Demand Avoidance

This group meets over Zoom. To receive the Zoom link contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Thursday 31st March 8.00 pm

Thursday 28th April 8.00 pm

Thursday 26th May 8.00 pm

Thursday 30th June 8.00 pm

Autism Awareness Event in Godalming

Sainsbury's in Godalming is hosting an Autism Awareness Day on Saturday April 2. Whether you have a child already diagnosed, on the pathway or want to learn something new, please do go along. Show support, help raise money and awareness.

There will be autism advice, support and help for parents and carers. A lot of great raffle prizes to win, award-winning ice cream and some fantastic merchandise such as keyrings, bears and much more.

The event is in Sainsburys, Woolsack Way, Godalming GU7 1LQ.

Findings from Active Surrey Research Last Year

You may remember completing some research last November by Active Surrey on supporting young people with additional needs and disabilities to take part in more sport and physical activity.

They conducted two surveys, one for parents/carers of young people with additional needs and disabilities (with a section to do with their child) and another survey for those who work with young people with additional needs and disabilities including schools, youth workers and sports clubs.

Farran Leach, the Active Communities Officer for Active Surrey said, "I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in the surveys and voiced their experiences and opinions.... we received over 351 responses for the parents and young people survey and over 120 for those who work with young people survey."

Key findings included:

1. The provision of sports and physical activities should focus on the needs of children with autism, ADHD and those with speech, language and communication difficulties. These conditions were the most prevalent in the survey sample and national and local datasets would support this too.
2. Anxiety, fear of judgement and not having anyone to do activities with are the three main barriers to participation
3. Parents and staff identified that the workforce needs improvements in knowledge of children's needs and the skills to manage them appropriately
4. Funding is a major barrier to participation. There is a strong case that increased funding for children with additional needs and disabilities to take part in sports and physical activities could improve opportunities and activity levels for them
5. Facilities and events are not providing adequately for autistic children.

Active Surrey believe these findings should not be taken in isolation. The issues faced by children with additional needs and disabilities, their families and schools are complex and require organisations to work together to provide suitable solutions in conjunction with all involved, but with particular emphasis on cooperation with the children's families. Active Surrey intend to use the findings to:

- Present to local stakeholders and providers that we work with so they can implement some of the findings into their work
- Identify if further and more specific research is needed to be conducted for example, why these young people's anxiety is so high when thinking about taking part in sport and physical activity
- Support some of the projects we are currently working on and intend to start in the future.

You can view an infographic and survey report on their website:

<https://bit.ly/3qp96cl>

If you have any additional questions or queries, then please do get in touch with Farran: farran.leach@surreycc.gov.uk.

MEETING REPORT: Talk on School Avoidance

On 8th March, NAS Surrey Branch hosted an online talk by Suzy Rowland from the Happy in School Project <https://www.happyinschoolproject.com/> entitled **School Avoidance: Truth behind the tears – from barriers to breakthrough**

Suzy's overriding philosophy is well-being first then learning will follow. She began her presentation by explaining that school avoidance is not oppositional or defiant; it is a complex and deep-rooted issue, which has an impact on both parent and child mental health.

COVID has served to exacerbate this complex problem and school-avoidant children often experience a cluster of anxiety conditions, such as eating disorders and depression, together with their neurodivergent profile. School avoidance shows that the needs of the child are not being met.

Children need support to learn how to communicate these anxious feelings and to develop coping skills. This requires the parent/professional to work with children to understand and identify the triggers so that adjustments can be made to help. When school-avoidant children don't feel safe in the school environment, Suzy recommended the following approach:

Observe – "I have noticed that..."

Validate – "It can feel uncomfortable when you experience ..."

Redirect – "Going to school is important, what are some of the things we can do to help you?"

Recognise and accept that sometimes a child is so distressed that they simply cannot manage that day. Don't feel guilty and try not to increase the child's feelings of guilt. You may have no option but to stay home that day - it's important not to use physical force to get children into school, as that removes all agency and will reinforce their feeling of invalidation and trauma.

Moving forward is the best option, but address the important question, "Is this the right school setting for the child?" if all other approaches have been exhausted. If you agree that this is the right setting going forward, create a back-to-school plan:

Remember they are **S.C.A.R.E.D** and need to:

- feel **Safe**
- be **Calm**
- receive **Affirmation**
- have a **Routine**
- receive **Empathy**
- help to **Develop**

In summary, Suzy said to remember that the child may be traumatised and that behaviour is communication.

You can read a full report on this talk on our website:

<https://nassurreybranch.org/2022/03/21/meeting-report-talk-on-school-avoidance/?preview>

RESEARCH REQUESTS

Research Projects by UCL Relevant to Autistic Children or Adults

University College London is running several research projects relevant to families that include someone with autism.

Autism & Culture Study For Children aged 4-11 – via video call

The researchers are interested in whether living in different countries and cultures affects the way autistic children understand other people and will focus on children from the UK and Pakistan.

It's for children aged 4-11 years with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum, and language ability roughly in the 3 to 7-year-old range. Children will take part in some simple story-based tasks, and some picture tasks assessing language. Parents will be asked to fill in some questionnaires.

The interview is by online video call and takes about 1 hour, but your child will only be involved for about 45 mins. You will be given £7.50 for your time and effort. For more details, Anum at anum.hossain.21@ucl.ac.uk

Lie Detection Study For Teens aged 11-17 – online study

The researchers are interested in how different people detect lies, how it relates to their experiences, and how this ability changes as they grow up. The study is for 11-17 year-olds, with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum, and who are educated in mainstream school (or equivalent - contact them if you're unsure).

The interview involves doing some logic puzzles, word games, lie detection games and questionnaires. A parent/guardian will be required to give their consent at the beginning of the study and fill in some basic information about their child.

Calls are about 90 minutes, with plenty of breaks between stages. Parents are needed for about 10 minutes at the beginning to read essential information and give consent. Every participant gets a £10 Amazon UK voucher and gets the chance to win BONUS PRIZES for best lie detector!

You can find out more at <https://www.devdivlab.org.uk/SpottingLiesParents> for more information and to participate or get in touch with Ishita Chowdhury at ishita.chowdhury.16@ucl.ac.uk

Brain Scan Study For Adults Aged 18-60 – In London

The researchers want to know how your brain reacts when they show you funny (hopefully!) sounds and videos.

It's for 18 to 60-year-old autistic adults who are either native English speakers or are extremely fluent in English, are right-handed, and live within easy travelling distance of London. You will be given a brain scan at a COVID-secure brain imaging centre. The session will take around 4 hours with a 1.5 hour (max) MRI brain scan and takes place near Russell Square, London. They will reimburse taxi fares and you'll get £10 per hour as a thank you, plus reasonable travel expenses. Get in touch with Ceci at g.cai.17@ucl.ac.uk

Research into How Autistic Adolescents Use the Internet

The University of Surrey are running a research study to understand more about how autistic adolescents use the internet to communicate with others and how this impacts on their relationships and feelings of wellbeing.

If your young people are aged 11-16, have a diagnosis of autism, use the internet to communicate with people and would be interested in taking part/would like to know more please contact Jess Evans at: jessicafrances.evans@surrey.ac.uk.

Parent's Perceptions About Young Children's Development

This research project is being run by University College London (UCL) Institute of Education, about young children's development. Researchers are looking for parents of autistic children up to the age of 5 to complete a short questionnaire.

The study is part of a project designed to support parents/caregivers to develop their young children's skills in the home environment.

The researchers are asking parents to fill in a questionnaire on your phone, tablet or computer which takes 10-15 minutes. This study has full ethical approval. You can participate here: https://uclioe.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Ui1V5QUA7QWlhk

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Spencer Hayes spencer.hayes@ucl.ac.uk, Dr Jo Van Herwegen j.vanherwegen@ucl.ac.uk and Tugce Cetiner tugce.cetiner.19@ucl.ac.uk

INFORMATION FOR ADULTS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Auternative Coaching CIC

Auternative Coaching is a Community Interest Company that specialises in coaching autistic people, and people with related social communication difficulties or learning difficulties, as well as their families and caregivers.

Auternative Coaching work with autistic adults and or a parent/caregivers. They use adapted coaching techniques and concepts to help individuals explore new strategies, reframe thinking, raise awareness and overcome the self-limiting beliefs that can get in the way.

They offer 121 coaching for autistic adults, 121 coaching for parents/carers of autistic children, group coaching courses, and bespoke coaching courses and training for companies that employ or support autistic people.

All coaches have first-hand experience of autism, a Diploma of Applied NLP: Autism Coaching and five years plus experience of working with autistic individuals, their families and caregivers.

Although they are based in Enfield, some of their services are accessible because they are doing some online training.

<https://www.auternativecoaching.com/>

NAS Online Branches for Autistic People

The NAS's new online branches offer an opportunity to meet like-minded people, make friends, or try a new hobby or interest and get to know fellow autistic people online from the comfort of your own home.

Online branches are free to join and all autistic people are welcome, but under 16s must be supervised by an adult, and people that need more support must bring a support carer with them. Online branches currently running cover areas of interest including arts and crafts, book club, running, employment and LGBTQ+

For further details go to: <https://bit.ly/3ubToV1>

Programme for Autistic Job-Seekers

Autism Forward and AS Mentoring are running a programme for autistic job-seekers which includes:

- Support from autism-specialist mentors in online group workshops
- One to one mentoring sessions
- Valuable materials to use during and after the programme, such as workshop slides, workbooks and resources.
- Access to future job opportunities, internships and vacancies advertised by AS Mentoring partner employers

Participants get a mentor to work with them for the duration of the programme. There are also six, live, online and interactive group workshops, each two hours long and delivered by experienced mentors. Topics covered are:

1. Assessing your work options

You get to meet your group of fellow autistic jobseekers, identify your goals and any barriers to access work.

2. Pathways into work

Find out the steps to employment, and what employers look for. Recognise your skills, strengths, and areas of development arising from your neurodiversity.

3. Jobsearching

Find out the key resources to use for job searching, understand job descriptions and person spec. and create a personal job searching plan.

4. Sharing your diagnosis

This session covers the pros and cons of sharing your diagnosis, when and how to do so and who with. It includes a chance to learn from experiences of autistic peers.

5. CV and cover letters

You'll learn how to write a CV that showcases your skills, do's and don'ts and about the different types of CV, plus how to format and write a cover letter.

6. Interview Skills

This covers autism and communication barriers at interviews, asking for adjustments and interpreting and answering interview questions

The full cost of the programme is £654. If the cost is a barrier and you have no other means to pay, funding options are available subject to Autism Forward's policy.

For details email workshops@asmentoring.co.uk or visit www.asmentoring.co.uk

Shared Lives Community-Based Support

Shared Lives is a national scheme that offers a community-based model of care and support for disabled or autistic people, or those with other support needs, whatever their age. It can be an alternative to home care, supported living or residential care for adults who are eligible for support from Surrey County Council Adult Social Care.

Surrey Choices runs the Shared Lives scheme in Surrey and the surrounding area. Shared Lives carers open their home, family and community life to share it with an adult in need of support. Arrangements can be long term where customers live with a carer, stay for a short break or have day support, including emergency respite such as when a family member or full time carer needs to stay in hospital.

Living with a Shared Lives family provides people with independence in their own community. Carers are matched to their needs and these will be linked with a home that suits them, fully respecting their independence and choice. Support can vary from a few hours a week to someone becoming a full-time family member.

The service is registered and inspected by the Care Quality Commission.

For details contact Surrey Choices: info@surreychoices.com or tel: 01483 806806.

NB: You, or your autistic family member, must have been assessed as eligible for Adult Social Care to use the service. If you've not had an assessment and would like to be considered, go to <https://bit.ly/3INh7yr> or call 0300 200 1005.

Ambitious Youth Network

Ambitious about Autism has launched an online platform for autistic young people aged 16 to 25. It's a safe and moderated online space to help them understand their autistic identity and reduce isolation and loneliness that many feel.

Young people can share experiences and find volunteering, work experience and employment opportunities. There will also be opportunities for people who use the platform to work together and campaign for change. For details go to <https://bit.ly/3lpVvIc>

New Supported Employment Consultancy in Surrey

EDGE is a specialist Supported Employment Service which has recently started operating in Surrey.

It offers support to young people from 16 years old upwards and works collaboratively with Education providers, Local Authorities, Job Centre Plus and other professionals.

They offer employability skills training and support people to enter the world of work. There are charges for their services.

For more information, view their website at: www.edge-consultancy.com or contact info@edge-consultancy.com or call Jennifer Brown 07425 471014. Facebook/Instagram @EDGEDisability

STOP PRESS

Summer Short Breaks and Activities

Family Voice Surrey has published a useful downloadable list of all the short breaks and activities for children with autism and / or SEND in one place:

<https://www.familyvoicesurrey.org/single-post/book-now-for-short-breaks>

They have worked with the Short Breaks Team at Surrey County Council to give an overview of the schemes on offer, where they are based, what they offer and importantly when their summer booking windows open.

Do bear in mind that places on all these schemes are limited and many can only be booked at certain times.

Schemes suitable for autistic children include:

- Challengers – holiday and youth schemes
- YMCA East Surrey – after school, Saturday and holiday clubs
- NAS kids clubs – accessible via Mindworks Surrey
- Surrey Arts – online after school activities
- Wheels for All – disability cycling clubs
- Freewheelers Youth Theatre – after school activities

About NAS Surrey Branch

NAS Surrey Branch is a volunteer-run support group for the parent/carers of autistic children and adults and the partners of autistic people. It's FREE to join (although a small donation is appreciated) and we have around 2,000 members in and around Surrey. To join, go to nassurreybranch.org or email surrey.branch@nas.org.uk to request a membership form.

If you are a member of National Autistic Society at national level, you can nominate us to receive part of your subscription by emailing supportercare@nas.org.uk.

We are part of the National Autistic Society which works for autistic people and runs services such as schools, clubs and adult centres. It has over 20,000 members, over 100 local branches and works in partnership with more than 50 local autism societies.

The NAS exists **to transform lives** by being a trusted source of support and practical advice for autistic people and their families at key stages in life and **change attitudes** by working with businesses, policymakers, autism professionals and the public to reduce isolation and open up opportunities in society as a whole.

**National Autistic Society, 393 City Rd, London EC1V 1NG www.autism.org.uk.
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